

Question: What do the various symbols in our stained glass mean here at St. Patrick's?

Answer: Image descriptions will go from front to back, describing the images from right to left starting on the south side (left side) of the church and describing all images on the south side before moving back to the front of the church to the north side. Each stained glass window has two images. Each pair of images on a window represents a letter below.

A: Cross with Crown: The crown represents royal power with the cross symbolizing Christ. This means that Christ is of royal blood and king.

Anchor: The anchor represents strength and stability. This strength and stability is the church. This comes from Hebrews 6:19 that reads, "We have this hope, a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters the inner shrine behind the curtain." The anchor is one of the oldest symbols in the church. The way the anchor is made also allows for it to double as a cross.

B: Cross: The simple cross represents the place where Christ died and atoned for our sins. The cross is empty representing the resurrected Christ.

Crown of Thorns: The thorn crown represents Jesus' suffering and ridicule before dying upon the cross. The "INRI" in between the crown is the Latin acronym for "Jesus of Nazareth King of the Jews."

C: Lamb on Bible with Banner and Cross: This image represents John the Baptist pointing to Jesus and saying, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world." The lamb was the animal sacrificed by ancient Jewish tradition at Passover, and Jesus came to be known as the "Lamb of God." The white banner represents the body of Christ and the staff with a cross at the end of it represents the cross Christ was crucified on.

Dove with Halo: This image of the dove represents the Holy Spirit descending "like a dove" on Jesus at his baptism in the Jordan River by John. See Matthew 3:13-17.

D: Lamp and Book: The single book represents the word of God. The lamp symbolizes wisdom and the Bible which light our way.

Book with A and Ω: The Alpha is the first letter in the Greek alphabet, the Omega, is the last. Jesus says to John, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." (Rev: 22:13) Traditionally these two letters are the sign of Christ.

E: Chalice with Grapes: Grapes represent Jesus as the true vine, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower." (John 15:1). Grapes can also symbolize the Eucharist.

Wheat: Like grapes, wheat represents the Eucharist. It can also represent the human nature of Jesus.

(Moving back to the front of the church on the right (north) side)

F: Alpha and Omega: As already explained the Alpha and Omega are Greek letters that represent Jesus as the ultimate, the beginning and the end. (Revelation 22:13)

IHS: One of the oldest symbols in the Church, it is the abbreviation of Jesus' name in Greek (Iasous). There is also a Latin phrase that corresponds with these letters: Iesus Hominum Salvator (Jesus, Savior of Men).

G: Crown: The crown with three points represents the Trinity, royal lineage, and kingship of Jesus.

Dove with Olive Branch: Usually representing the Holy Spirit, the dove in this image has an olive branch in its mouth. This image parallels the story of Noah and the ark when Noah released a dove to find land. The dove returned with an olive branch in its mouth representing God's renewed peace towards all humanity. (Genesis 8)

H: Mitre, Pectoral Cross, and Shepherd's Staff or Crosier: The mitre is the hat worn by bishops, cardinals, and popes and represents authority. The two flaps or fanons on the mitre represent God's promise found in both the Old and New Testaments. The pectoral cross in this image is usually worn by bishops, popes, and cardinals and is an official ornament of office. The Crosier is the "pastoral staff" and symbolizes the responsibility of the bishop to keep the members of his flock and lead the people in Christ.

Keys: Keys represent Peter who was given the keys to heaven by Jesus when he states, "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." (Matthew 16:19)

I: Blessed Sacrament: This image is of the blessed sacrament contained within the Luna. The larger structure around the Luna is called the Monstrance.

Grapes: Grapes represent the Eucharist. The wine that comes from the grapes can also be understood as the blood that Christ shed when he was on the cross.

Source: <http://www.christiansymbols.net> and *The Catholic Encyclopedia*